

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of controlling content displayed on a television, comprising:
 - providing control inputs to said television;
 - 5 displaying content on said television, said content selected in response to said control inputs by a controller located remotely from said television; and
 - communicating said control inputs and said content between said television and said controller via a bi-directional communications channel.
- 10 2. The method of claim 1 wherein communicating said control inputs and said content between said television and said controller via a bi-directional communications channel comprises:
 - converting said control inputs and said content to communications signals according to a protocol associated with said bi-directional
 - 15 communications channel; and
 - transmitting said communications signals between said television and said remotely located controller.
- 20 3. The method of claim 2 wherein said bi-directional communications channel is a serial bus.
4. The method of claim 3 wherein said protocol is selected from the group including EIA/RS-232, EIA/RS-422, EIA/RS-432 and EIA/RS-485.

5. The method of claim 1 further comprising electrically isolating said television from said communications channel and said remotely located controller.
6. The method of claim 1 wherein said control inputs include wired or wireless outputs from a device including a pillow speaker or control inputs connected to said pillow speaker, a keyboard, and a remote control.
7. The method of claim 1 further comprising obtaining said control inputs from an output port of said television; converting said control inputs to a protocol associated with said bi-directional communications channel; and transmitting said control inputs to said remotely located controller.
8. The method of claim 7 further comprising: converting said control inputs from said protocol to a format compatible with said remotely located controller; and applying said control inputs to said remotely located controller.
9. The method of claim 1 further comprising obtaining said content from said remotely located controller; converting said content to a protocol associated with said bi-directional communications channel; and transmitting said content to said television.

10. The method of claim 9 further comprising:

converting said content from said protocol to a format compatible with said

television; and

displaying said content to said television.

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11. A system for controlling content displayed on a television, comprising:

a television operative to receive control inputs, and to provide said control inputs
at an output port thereof;

a controller located remotely from said television and operative to select content
10 for said television in response to said control inputs;

a bi-directional communications channel linking said television and said remotely
located controller;

a first interface unit connected between said television and said channel,
operative to transmit said control inputs on said channel and to receive

15 said content from said channel; and

a second interface unit connected between said channel and said remotely
located controller, operative to receive said control inputs from said
channel and transmit said content on said channel.

20 12. The system of claim 11 wherein said bi-directional communications channel is a
serial bus.

13. The system of claim 12 wherein said serial bus complies with a protocol selected
from the group including EIA/RS-232, EIA/RS-422, EIA/RS-432 and EIA/RS-485.

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14. The system of claim 11 wherein said first interface unit electrically isolates said television from said channel and said remotely located controller.

15. The system of claim 11 further comprising a source of said control inputs
5 selected from the group including a wired or wireless pillow speaker, keyboard, and remote control.

16. A method of distributing content to a plurality of televisions under control local to each television, comprising:

10 centrally locating, remote from said televisions, a corresponding plurality of controllers;
receiving control inputs at each said television, and transmitting said control inputs to a corresponding controller;
selecting content by each controller in response to said control inputs;
15 transmitting said content from each said controller to each said television; and
and displaying said content at each said television.

17. The method of claim 16 further comprising connecting each said television and each corresponding said controller in data communications via a bi-directional
20 communications channel.

18. The method of claim 16 further comprising electrically isolating each said television from said controllers.

19. The method of claim 17 wherein said bi-directional communications channel complies with a protocol selected from the group including EIA/RS-232, EIA/RS-422, EIA/RS-432 and EIA/RS-485.

5 20. The method of claim 16 further comprising connecting each said controller via a router to a server operative to selectively retrieve said content from one or more content sources.

21. The method of claim 19 wherein said content sources include prerecorded
10 audio/video selections.

22. The method of claim 19 wherein said content sources include the Internet.